



Monthly e-Newsletter – November, 2005

What is NEPA?

During recent tower installations for the AWIN system, environmental concerns have been voiced by some users. There are many steps that have to be taken before a tower can be built, and used for the digital radio system.

Under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) of 1969, the state is required to do an environmental assessment on the installation of sites. Regulations on federal grants and FCC licensing require that the state has to assess the sites for possible impacts to the environment.

Communication Services, Inc. in Phoenix coordinates the studies for the AWIN project.

Communication Services begins the assessment process by gathering all the information they can about the potential site. The company does a site visit, and evaluates the site and the surrounding area.

Surveyors take photos of the property and structures on the property to be included in the evaluation.

Communication Services forwards gathered information to several entities for evaluation and research. The Arkansas Department of Heritage, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Communications Commission, FEMA, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and federally recognized and interested Native American groups are some of the entities consulted about potential site locations.

These groups are given time to do research on the site, and are given an opportunity to respond to the land use.

Information about the potential use of the site is then posted for the public to make comments. Any person with public interest has thirty days to respond.

Once the assessment is complete, and it's determined whether or not building the site would have significant impacts on the local environment, the installation process can begin.

New towers for CSEPP

Three new sites have been installed in Grant County as part of the CSEPP Project. Technicians worked for three days cutting over towers at the Grant County Emergency Management Office, and in northern and western parts of the county. The installation of the sites did not require any disruption of service. The three new towers are in Area K, and that area has not been cutover to the AWIN system yet.



Tabletop exercise

A group of AWIN users participated in a tabletop exercise Tuesday, November 15th at the MAC building. Participants were presented with emergency scenarios, and worked through steps that would be taken in an actual incident. Participants were encouraged to exercise the policies and guidelines that have been developed for the AWIN radio system.

Several observers were on hand to gather information throughout the exercise. AWIN program managers will in turn use that information gathered to make any needed revisions to the policies and guidelines. Information received during the exercise will also assist in determining the type of training that end users should receive.



Send us your story

Do you have a story you would like to share with other end users? Any advice you want to pass along to agencies that are awaiting a cutover in their area? We want to know how AWIN is working for you! Please send your comments to awin@arkansas.gov.

Coming Events & Reminders

Next cutover sites...

Target dates have been set for cutovers in Areas A, J and K. Towers in Area A are set to be cutover on November 29th, and Area A is scheduled to be completed by November 30th. Technicians will begin

Area J on December 1st, and are scheduled to be complete by December 6th. The cutover in Area K is slated to begin December 7th, and be complete by December 9th. After these areas are cutover to the AWIN radio system, only two analog areas are left in the state. Cutover dates will be set soon for Area and G.

Brinkley Command and Control user Group Meeting, 9:00 a.m., November 29th, Brinkley Convention Center.

Command and Control "Train the Trainer" sessions...

North Little Rock, Grace Communications, 715 W. Broadway, 10:00 a.m., Tuesday November 29th.
Pine Bluff, Jefferson County Courthouse Conference Room, 101 E. Barraque, 9:00 a.m., Wednesday November 30th. Hot Springs, Mid-South Communications Conference Room, 200 Aviation Plaza, 9:00 a.m., Thursday December 1st.

For more information on the "Train the Trainer" sessions please contact David Baker at 682-1185 or david.baker@arkansas.gov.

***Please see the attached letter from AWIN Program Manager Dale Saffold. Information about the Command and Control Template is included in the correspondence.**

AWIN Support

In partnership with the Arkansas State Police, the Department of Information Systems (DIS) operates AWIN Call Center to support all AWIN subscribers (radio users) with technical assistance or AWIN-related requests. Technicians are on call in the event of any emergency. Call (501) 682-HELP (682-43) or toll-free (800) 435-7989 or e-mail awin.support@arkansas.gov.

The DIS professionals who provide support for AWIN have fielded 182 customer requests to date.

For an HTML version of this and other AWIN publications, please visit http://www.awin.arkansas.gov/newsletter_archive/default.htm.

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